

ITEM #: 9  
DATE: 02-10-26  
DEPT: W&PC

## COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL CODE REVISIONS FOR WATER METER SETTING REQUIREMENTS**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Chapter 28 of the Ames *Municipal Code* establishes requirements for water service and water meters within the City of Ames. **Staff is proposing amendments to Chapter 28 to clarify and standardize water meter installation requirements in support of the City's transition to the new Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system.**

The new telemetry system requires the installation of a signal wire to allow a radio to be mounted on the outside of home or business in new neighborhoods, due to their distance from the data collection units. Having that wire installed as a part of the original construction of the property allows for a neat, clean installation.

**Staff is requesting that Council provide direction to staff to prepare an ordinance to include a requirement for a signal wire to be installed prior to installation of the water meter in new construction.** This would be similar to the way a signal wire was required in the past to connect the water meter to the manually read remote display mounted on the outside of a building. **The signal wires will not be necessary for existing meter installations, and customers with an existing water meter will not be impacted by this ordinance change.**

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

Staff sent letters and emails to all plumbers and home builders who had applied for a plumbing permit in the past twelve months, informing them of the proposed changes. That same letter invited them to attend an informational open house on February 2, 2026, where they had an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns about the proposed revisions. There were no attendees at that open house, and staff has received no inquiries on the proposed language. Another round of notifications will be sent prior to first reading of the ordinance, should Council agree to proceed with the updated requirements.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Direct staff to draft an ordinance revising Chapter 28 Division II to conform to the installation requirements of the new Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system.
2. Do not direct staff to prepare the ordinance revision. This will require City staff to install the necessary signal wire "after the fact" once the new structure is built at a higher cost and potentially with a less "finished" appearance.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The new Aclara metering system being adopted by both Electric and Water requires a signal wire to be run between the water meter and the radio that will transmit the meter reading signal. The proposed changes would reinstate a requirement for a signal wire to be installed at the time of initial construction. Including the language in the *Municipal Code* will help to clarify the requirements and standardize water meter installations. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1, as described above.